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The Library's collection of cuneiform tablets features multiple school writing exercises (bottom left) and accounting records (clockwise from top left).

African and Middle Eastern Division

Ancient Tablets Are Latest Migration from Global Gateway

Legacy platform hosted gems from the Library's international collections.

BY WENDI A. MALONEY

School writing exercises, wage accounts and receipts – for wool, silver, livestock, fish. Seemingly ordinary records, perhaps, the kind that might eventually be tossed away today. But the clay tablets on which they're inscribed are anything but.

They are from ancient Mesopotamia and contain the earliest examples of writing in the Library's collections – the first dates from 2144 B.C. They're also among the institution's oldest holdings.

This summer, the Library's digital presentation of the tablets migrated from the legacy

Global Gateway platform to loc.gov, making it easier for everyone – scholars, teachers, students, history buffs – to discover and learn from some of the Library's rarest collection items.

"They're quite important," Muhannad Salhi of the African and Middle East Division (AMED) said of the tablets. "They give us insight into ancient societies and how they conducted business."

The presentation, titled "Cuneiform Tablets: From the Reign of Gudea of Lagash to Shalmanassar III," is the most recent migration from Global Gateway, launched in 2000 to

CUNEIFORM TABLETS, CONTINUED ON 8

NOTICES

DONATED TIME

The following employees have satisfied eligibility requirements to receive leave donations from other staff members. Contact Keyoni Potter at kpotter@loc.gov.

Lynette Brown
Tiffany Corley Harkins
Stephanie Jefferson

Linda Malone
Kenneth Mitchell

STAFF VACCINATION DEADLINE ANNOUNCED

The Library has announced that all current Library employees must be vaccinated against COVID-19 by Jan. 3, 2022. Employees are considered fully vaccinated when it has been at least two weeks since they received the second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine or the single dose of a one-dose vaccine. To meet the deadline to be fully vaccinated, current employees must receive the final dose of their COVID-19 vaccine by Dec. 20. At this time, booster shots are not necessary to be considered fully vaccinated.

Consistent with applicable law, the Library will consider individual exceptions to the vaccination requirement based on an employee's medical condition or sincerely held religious belief. The deadline for submitting exception requests is Nov. 15. All supporting information must be received by Nov. 22.

For more information about this new policy, see [Special Announcement 21-13: COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement](#).

QUARTERLY TECH FORUM

Nov. 17, 2 to 3:30 p.m.
[Online](#)

All Library staff are invited to the quarterly Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) tech forum. OCIO senior leaders will provide an update on recent IT activities and the chief and deputy chief information officers will field questions about Library technology.

To submit a question in advance, send an email to askthecio@loc.gov.

The forum will be recorded and shared on the OCIO intranet page along with [previous tech forums](#).

CFC VIRTUAL CHARITY FAIR

Nov. 16, noon
[Online](#)

Hear from five local charities about what they have achieved with help from the Combined Federal Campaign.

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GAZETTE

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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MISSION OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library's central mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

ABOUT THE GAZETTE

An official publication of the Library of Congress, The Gazette encourages Library managers and staff to submit articles and photographs of general interest. Submissions will be edited to convey the most necessary information.

Back issues of The Gazette in print are available in the Communications Office, LM 143. Electronic archived issues and a color PDF file of the current issue are available online at loc.gov/staff/gazette.

GAZETTE WELCOMES LETTERS FROM STAFF

Staff members are invited to use the Gazette for lively and thoughtful debate relevant to Library issues. Letters must be signed by the author, whose place of work and telephone extension should be included so we can verify authorship. If a letter calls for management response, an explanation of a policy or actions or clarification of fact, we will ask for management response.—Ed.

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GAZETTE DEADLINES

The deadline for editorial copy for the Dec. 3 Gazette is Wednesday, Nov. 24.

Email editorial copy and letters to the editor to mhartsell@loc.gov and wmal@loc.gov.

To promote events through the Library's online calendar (www.loc.gov/loc/events) and the Gazette Calendar, email event and contact information to calendar@loc.gov by 9 a.m. Monday of the week of publication.

Boxed announcements should be submitted electronically (text files) by 9 a.m. Monday the week of publication to mhartsell@loc.gov and wmal@loc.gov.

Event Celebrates Poetry and Native American ‘Firsts’

The U.S. poet laureate and U.S. interior secretary discuss their poetic roots.

BY ANNE HOLMES

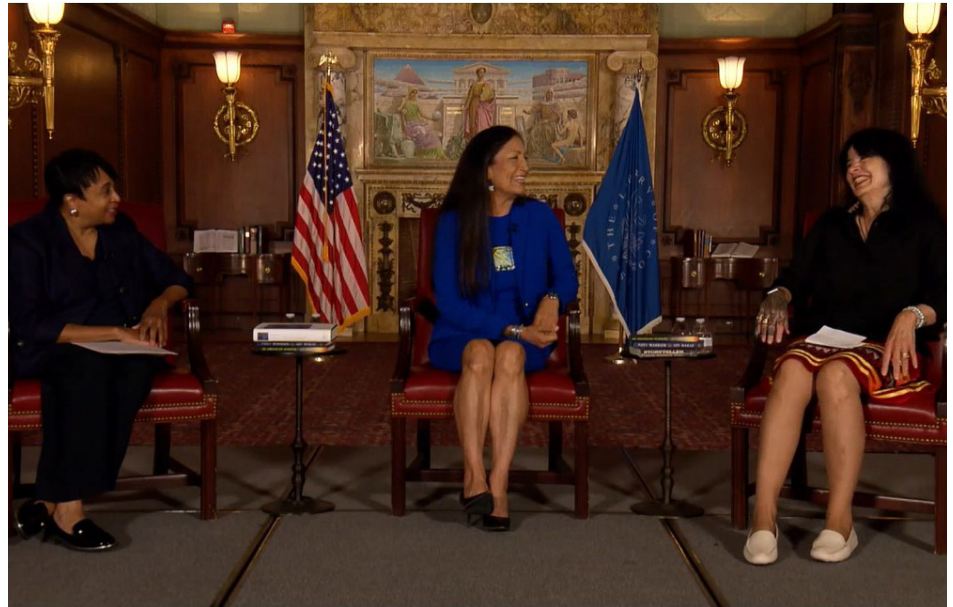
Joy Harjo remembers the moment when Deb Haaland stepped into her undergraduate poetry class at the University of New Mexico. “You came in with a motorcycle helmet,” Harjo said, “and you didn’t look like the usual motorcycle person. But you later told me that it had to do with fossil fuels and not wanting to use a car to waste gas.”

In a Nov. 1 event celebrating Native American Heritage Month, the two longtime friends sat down together in the Library’s historic Members Room for a conversation about poetry and public service with Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden.

A few decades after their first meeting, the poet and her student are now U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo and Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland. Harjo is the country’s first Native American poet laureate, and Haaland is the first Native American cabinet secretary in U.S. history. During the event, Haaland pointed out that Hayden was also another “first” in her position.

After that initial meeting, Harjo continued to mentor Haaland as an emerging Native American poet. The two took a road trip to Oklahoma to the first Native American writers’ conference and, years later, Harjo featured one of Haaland’s poems in an anthology featuring Native women’s writing. “We’ve been together for a long time,” Haaland said of their friendship. “For some reason, our lives are always intertwined, and of course it’s always perfect.”

The two have taken different paths, but poetry has been their guide. According to Harjo, their civic roles as poet laureate and interior secretary are “very



Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden (from left) talks with U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland and Joy Harjo, U.S. poet laureate.

connected, because being a poet is very connected to environmental justice. ... I got into poetry because I could see that words could change things.”

Hayden asked Harjo and Haaland to each share a favorite poem by the other. Before Harjo read Haaland’s poem, “For Water,” she elaborated on the ancestral belief that “the water is precious. ... And so, what does water ask from human beings? Water wants to be acknowledged.” Haaland followed with a reading of “My Man’s Feet,” a poem from Harjo’s newest poetry collection, “An American Sunrise.”

Asked what poetry has meant to Haaland in her work and throughout her life, the secretary said, “Words matter. ... It’s refreshing when somebody gets you, right? They put their finger on how you’re feeling, or they’ve written it down so you feel like someone’s listening.”

For Harjo’s part, serving as poet laureate extends the civic work she had already been doing. She feels “that we all have service positions. ... We might be called king, or secretary, or a garbage collector or whatever, but every

position is a service position. We’re all here to help. We’re all here to contribute something and to take care of each other.”

Harjo’s poet laureate project, [“Living Nations, Living Words,”](#) allows her to “up the ante,” she said, and “to give back something that could be useful to the community.” The project features contemporary Native nations poets in an immersive map and poetry audio collection. “I’m not the only Native poet. In any community, diversity needs to be honored, because that’s health.”

Harjo and Haaland agreed that poetry has a role in civic discourse and has opened doors for them both.

“I’m the first Native cabinet secretary,” Haaland said. “I hope that I’m not the last, and so we open these doors, these doors become open. Joy opened a door. [Hayden] helped her to open that door, right? We’re all here to help each other, and we need to move forward.”

[Watch the event.](#) ■

Reminder: Library Operations During Inclement Weather

With an eye toward the approaching winter season, this reminder outlines the Library's inclement-weather operating procedures and notification process.

In the event of inclement weather affecting the Washington, D.C., area, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issues federal government operating status guidance. Staff can access this guidance on OPM's [website](#).

The Library's Capitol Hill complex and its Cabin Branch and Taylor Street annexes follow OPM operating guidelines issued prior to the start of the workday with some exceptions.

After the start of the workday, the deputy Librarian of Congress, the chief of staff or a designee will approve all decisions on weather-related operations on behalf of the Librarian of Congress. Library staff will be notified about operations via an LC Operations email. Staff can also call the emergency phone line (202-707-0972, option 2).

Due to the geographical separation of the Packard Campus from Washington, D.C., its chief may issue a weather-related closure or early dismissal unique to the Packard Campus via email.

Fort Meade employees should refer to the Fort Meade Army garrison [website](#) or call the telephone hotline (301-677-6323) or the watch officer line (301-677-4444).

The Library will implement OPM operating status designations as follows:

(1) Open. The Library is open to on-site employees on time, and normal operating procedures are in effect. The Library will open the reading rooms to researchers with appointments at 9:30 a.m.

(2) Open with the option for unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework. The Library opens to staff at 6:30 a.m. and to researchers with appointments in reading rooms at 9:30 a.m., although

reading rooms may be subject to delayed opening. Employees who provide direct support for reading room operations may be required to report on-site.

(3) Open under delayed arrival with the option for unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework. The Library opens to staff at 6:30 a.m. and to researchers with appointments at the reading rooms at 9:30 a.m. Staff scheduled to work on-site have the option of arriving to work a set number of hours (announced by OPM) after their regular reporting time and using administrative leave for the hours they don't work due to the delay. OPM delayed-arrival announcements may not apply to individuals whose reporting time is 12:30 p.m. or later. The Library will review the situation by 10:30 a.m. and provide additional instructions only if a delayed arrival will remain in effect.

(4) Delayed opening. On-site employees must report to their office no later than the time announced by OPM. Employees have the option for unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework. The Library, including reading rooms, opens at the OPM-set time, and staff may arrive as early as the time the Library announces that day. OPM delayed-arrival announcements may not apply

to individuals whose reporting time is 12:30 p.m. or later. The Library will review the situation by 10:30 a.m. and provide additional instructions only if a delayed arrival will remain in effect.

(5) Closed. All Library buildings are closed to on-site staff and researchers with appointments, except emergency staff and staff with all-hours identification badges. If the Library is closed unexpectedly, employees approved for telework are expected to telework that day or request unscheduled leave.

When inclement weather is expected, employees approved to telework should take their laptop computers home the day before. If the Library is closed unexpectedly, employees approved for telework are expected to telework that day or request unscheduled leave.

For all inclement weather situations, employees on regular or situational telework should operate under their regular schedules. Employees with prior approval for unscheduled telework must notify their supervisors that they will exercise this option and are expected to work normal duty hours. Emergency employees are expected to report to work on time. ■

ARE YOU IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FORMER INTERNS?

Questions or ideas? Contact alumni@loc.gov



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Rep. Sharice Davids Narrates Kids Book for NLS

BY MARK LAYMAN

U.S. Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kansas) visited the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) on Oct. 19 to narrate her children's book, "Sharice's Big Voice: A Native Kid Becomes a Congresswoman," in the NLS studio. The book recounts Davids' path to becoming one of the first Native American women elected to Congress.

"I discovered the book while reading reviews and realized it was a perfect book for our collection," NLS youth librarian Jill Garcia said. "Picture books written by and featuring Native Americans are extremely rare, and here was one of the first Native Americans in Congress writing an inspiring book about her life. And I fell in love with her inclusive message."

Garcia originally intended to produce the book in electronic braille and as a print-braille picture book, in which semitransparent pages with braille are overlaid on the print pages, so a sighted person can read together with a blind person. Then, she decided to do it in audio, too, and thought it would be more powerful if it were done

in Davids' own voice.

Kristen Fernekes, head of NLS' Communications and Outreach Section; Alice O'Reilly, Collections Division chief; and Elizabeth Torkelson and Kimberly Crawford of the Congressional Relations Office took it from there, working with Davids' office to set up the recording session.

Davids was a little nervous but excited when she arrived at NLS that morning. "For a first-time narrator, she did an excellent job," NLS media lab head Celeste Lawson said. "As she warmed up to the mic, she relaxed into a conversational delivery that was perfect for her book." Davids took her role seriously, even stopping to call a leader of the Ho-Chunk Nation, of which she is an enrolled member, to double check the pronunciation of a word.

"I'm thrilled – and honored – to be a part of the Library of Congress'



Rep. Sharice Davids (from left) views a print-braille copy of her book with Jason Yasner, Jason Broughton and Alice O'Reilly of NLS.

mission to make [its] resources available to everyone," Davids said afterward. "It was a very special experience to work with the staff and record the book."

The audio recording will be available to NLS patrons this month. The print-braille version is in the final stages of production, and the electronic braille version is already available on BARD, the NLS Braille and Audio Reading Download service. ■

Murray Wins Excellence Award

Kate Murray, digital projects coordinator in the Digital Collections Management and Services Division (DCMS), received an Excellence Award last week from the National Digital Stewardship Alliance (NDSA). The annual honor recognizes and encourages high achievement in digital preservation stewardship.

Murray leads the Audio-Visual Working Group of the Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative in DCMS and also manages the Sustainability of Digital Formats website. Both efforts seek to establish best practices to sustain and preserve digital assets held by libraries and other institutions.

Previously, Murray worked at the National Archives and Records Administration, specializing in standardizing and documenting moving image and audio formats. She has also served as a member or leader of several professional committees and organizations.

"Nearly everyone working in digital preservation has benefited from Kate's expertise, whether they know it not, due to the breadth and impact of activities she participates in," read the nomination submitted for Murray. She is "a sharer and a champion of good work taking place throughout the field."



Kate Murray

"I'm thankful to NDSA and my peers for the recognition," Murray said. ■

Effort Launched to Measure Success of Strategic Plan

Agencywide key performance indicators will be established.

BY LIZ WHITE

Staff from across the Library are collaborating to develop a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) to track the success of the Library's strategic plan. The KPI Design Project will enable the Library to collect data to demonstrate progress on three strategic goals: expanding access to the Library, enhancing its services and optimizing its resources.

Emily Roberts of the Office of Strategic Planning and Performance Management (SPPM) is leading the project, which launched this spring when Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden selected three executive champions to lead one strategic goal area each. Robin Dale, deputy librarian for Library Collections and Services, is championing KPIs for the expanded access goal. Register of Copyrights Shira Perlmutter is championing KPIs for enhancing services. And Ed Jablonski, the Library's chief operating officer, is championing optimization of resources.

Soon after the launch, 12 leaders from across the Library were named to serve on a working group tasked with identifying potential KPIs. In September, the working group brought seven candidates forward for consideration by the Library's Executive Committee. Two of the KPIs focus on collections and assets, two on Library users' interactions and experiences and three on growing and deploying Library assets.

The approach toward exploring potential KPIs will be familiar to staff members who participated in the Library's Envisioning 2025 initiative a few years ago to help the Library determine future priorities. Once again, the Library is convening "tiger teams," but this time to explore and define KPIs.



Tiger team members attend a virtual orientation to kick off the KPI Design Project.

Tiger teams consist of experienced, energetic and imaginative staff members from across Library service units who work together on a given assignment.

For example, Joe Cappello, the Library's chief human capital officer, is leading the employee investment tiger team. It will look at how the Library is investing in its workforce through training and career development and "explore new solutions to ensure our employees are better prepared to successfully execute the Library's strategic priorities," Cappello said.

The executive champions nominated seven individuals from different service units to lead the KPI tiger teams. Besides Cappello, others are Moryma Aydelott of the Library Collections and Services Group; Joe Puccio of Researcher and Collections Services; Maren Read and Rob Kasunic of the Copyright Office; and Kris Hassinger and Liz Scheffler of the Office of the Chief Operating Officer.

Forty-three staff members from across the Library were selected to participate on one of the tiger teams. Because they will leverage

their networks to help define the parameters of each KPI, additional staff members will also be tapped to share their insights.

"This approach ensures all service units are involved in making these important decisions," Perlmutter said.

In January, six teams will deliver implementation plans with recommendations for executing their assigned indicator. A seventh team will explore definitions and measures in more detail. The plans will outline the scope and definition of a KPI, cite relevant data sources and share suggested methods for data collection, analysis and reporting.

Hayden will be presented with final plans in spring 2022. In the last phase of the project, slated to begin in summer 2022, SPPM will use the tiger teams' implementation plans to launch a pilot KPI with the goal of rolling out additional approved KPIs at the start of fiscal 2023.

To learn more about the project, or to share information with a tiger team, contact Roberts at eeroberts@loc.gov. ■

**Your Employee Personal Page (EPP) is at
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Armand Lione

Armand Lione

Washington, D.C., is not often thought of as a center of Native American life. But American Indians walked the land that is now home to the nation's capital city long before Europeans arrived – a fact that local historian Armand Lione shares when he talks about his research, much of which he has conducted at the Library of Congress.

Tell us about your background and what inspired your research project.

I earned a Ph.D. in pharmacology and toxicology at the University of Rochester in the 1970s and have worked since 1986 as a reproductive toxicologist in Washington, D.C. Beginning in 2000, I started working from home. Then, in 2004, I spent the U.S. winter in Australia, where it was summer, and realized I could telecommute from just about anywhere.

In 2008, I started visiting Melbourne, Australia, and I went back every other year through 2020. Indigenous issues are very important in Australia. When I came back to D.C. in spring 2016, I decided to start researching the

Native people of Washington.

I live only a block away from Garfield Park and the former Daniel Carroll Estate on Capitol Hill. To my surprise, those locations turn out to be two of the best documented sites related to the Anacostan Indians who once lived in what is now Washington, D.C.

What resources have you used at the Library?

Basic information about the Anacostans is readily available – you can just search Wikipedia. But using the Library's resources has allowed me to dig much deeper.

I've consulted books from the collections, including works by former National Park Service chief archaeologist Stephen Potter and historian Helen Rountree, as well as articles from online databases – full access to JSTOR at the Library was very productive.

I've also used maps, such as Andrew Ellicott's 1790 map, which labeled the eastern branch of the Potomac River as the "Anna Kostia," and images, including drawings by John White from the 1500s that provide visual records of everyday life among the Algonquins.

What are some striking stories from your Library research?

Samuel Proudfit, in his 1889 work about the Native history of D.C., refers repeatedly to block 736. So, I visited the Geography and Map Division and asked if any information was available about the block. To my pleasant surprise, a staffer brought out a map of the Daniel Carroll Estate. On it, I found there was a spring, which helped explain why Carroll chose the site for his estate and why the Natives before him chose to live there.

Two personal journals also stood out to me – those of colonist and explorer Henry Fleet and physician Almon Rockwell – because they reveal some of the character of the men and aspects of everyday life in the 17th and 19th centuries.

Fleet was captured by the Anacostans in the early 1620s and

lived among them for five years until he was 27. Reading his journal, which I accessed in the Main Reading Room, allowed me to document how little he actually said about living with the Indians. "I spent my youth with the Natives," he wrote just once.

Rockwell, whose journal is also available through the Main Reading Room, was present at the deaths of Presidents Lincoln and Garfield, and he oversaw the construction of Garfield Park in honor of the fallen president. Unfortunately, Rockwell never commented on the Native remains his workmen found when creating the park.

Tell us how you share your findings.

I publish a [blog](#) and share my research on a [website](#) that features an interactive map showing locations around D.C. where artifacts have been found.

In addition, at the encouragement of Ruth Troccoli, the chief archaeologist of Washington, D.C., who is also very interested in the city's Native history, I started the D.C. Native History Project. It consists of a growing group of volunteers who work with local Piscataway/Conoy tribe members to get recognition for the Anacostan heritage of Washington, D.C. Our Facebook site now has nearly 150 members.

Also, in 2019 and again this summer, I set up a display in Garfield Park for a day to talk with neighbors about the Native history of the park and Native artifacts found on the Carroll Estate. The Washington Post wrote about my display this year.

Any advice for others who might be interested in researching a topic of interest at the Library?

Delving into the incredible holdings of the Library is made much easier and more productive with the help of the Library's excellent staff. Talking with an expert staff member about your research interest may open up avenues you haven't considered and lead you deeper into the wonderful materials in the Library! ■

CUNEIFORM TABLETS, CONTINUED FROM 1

showcase gems from the Library's international holdings. Although the platform was modern for its time, two decades later, its functionality is no longer cutting-edge.

"There's a lot more users can do in terms of interacting with digital content on loc.gov," Christa Maher of the Digital Collections Management and Services Division (DCMS) said. For example, it's possible to zoom deeply and view images side-by-side, which offers a better understanding of artifacts.

"Cuneiform Tablets" includes 38 items, mostly clay tablets but also several brick fragments and two clay cones. The originals are housed in AMED.

Cuneiform is a writing system the Sumerians developed in what is now southern Iraq. The tip of a reed stylus was impressed into a wet clay surface to draw strokes, after which the clay was either baked in a kiln or dried by the sun. Initially, cuneiform signs were pictograms, but they later became syllabic, or based on symbols.

Twenty-two of the Library's tablets contain inscriptions recording receipt of and payment for goods and services – accounting records, in effect. Twelve tablets are school exercise tablets, used by scribes learning the cuneiform writing system.

Unlike tablets meant as more permanent records, the exercise tablets were left unfired so they could be erased and reused. A teacher would inscribe a lesson, typically three words or a short sentence, on one side of the tablet, and a student copied and recopied it onto the other side to memorize it.

"This is one of the earliest forms of teaching the alphabet and writing," Salhi said.

Images of drawing sheets and transliterations add to the accessibility of the cuneiform web presentation.

On a visit to the Library in 1999, Assyriologist Marcel Sigrist created drawings for each three-di-

mensional item in the collection, presenting all sides of an item on a single sheet. He also transliterated cuneiform characters into Latin script with special diacritical marks to aid in pronunciation.

The transliterations help non-specialists in particular. "They give people an idea of what the different letters and symbols sounded like," Salhi said. "Scholars will already have a good idea."

The Library acquired its cuneiforms collection in 1929 from arts dealer Kirkor Minassian. Starting in the mid-19th century, explorers encountered cuneiform tablets stacked in what would have served as ancient libraries. At first, they had no idea what the tablets were, but scholars slowly began to decipher them, Salhi said.

So far, besides the cuneiform tablets, other individual collections that have migrated from Global Gateway to loc.gov are "Polish Declarations of Admiration and Friendship for the United States" and "Selections of Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Calligraphy."

Global Gateway also hosts collaborative presentations that point to content beyond the Library's holdings. Among those, Library content for "France in America," a collaboration between the Library and the Bibliothèque nationale de France, has migrated to loc.gov as have Library items in "Meeting of Frontiers," devoted to the settlement of the American West and the meeting of the Russian-American frontier.

Global Gateway's migration builds on ongoing work to transition the Library's legacy American Memory site to loc.gov. The two platforms share infrastructure and use the same dated search engine and servers.

"It's about bringing these up to speed with how we do things nowadays and removing the technical debt of having to maintain the different environments for them," Maher said.

When visitors scroll through a migrated Global Gateway col-

lection, they see just "the tip of the iceberg," Maher said.

Behind the scenes beforehand, dozens of staff across the Library put in many hours for each migration.

First, a DCMS project team evaluates the three primary components of an online collection – digital content files, descriptive metadata and contextual essays – and determines what technical upgrades will be required. As that work proceeds, curatorial divisions take a fresh look at a presentation's contextual materials, select featured items for the collection home page and, in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel, review and revise the rights and access statement.

Once all the components are ready, staff from the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) builds the website itself, assembling loc.gov item pages, a search index and the collection framework. In a final step before a collection's launch, OCIO manages a quality-assurance process.

"It's an involved process," Maher said.

But all the work pays off: Not only can researchers interact more easily with migrated content, but collections also become easier to find from outside loc.gov. Moreover, researchers can search across migrated collections, something that isn't possible on the legacy platforms.

"Migration elevates a collection's profile," Maher said. "So, researchers everywhere have better access to content."

For scholars of cuneiforms in particular, improved online access – at the Library and beyond – eases study of the ancient alphabet system and the civilizations in which it flourished. Other institutions, including the British Museum, Yale University and the University of Chicago, are also starting to make their collections available online, deepening the pool of resources.

"The Library's collection is part of a larger story," Salhi said. ■